

accomplished, lovely, lovable, and one who had such a sweet and gentle disposition.

Portia shows her capacity for strong mental activity when she so skillfully defends Antonio in the court of justice. She had confidence in herself, and this served to render her cool and collected throughout the entire proceeding.

She may be censured for assuming male attire, but we find that this was not an unfrequent occurrence in Shakespeare's time. She did it for love of her husband, though, and is therefore excused.

After she has cleared Antonio she skillfully secures the ring that her husband had sworn to keep until his death and afterward, in her roguish and sweetly teasing manner, she makes him feel very badly for having broken his oath.

Toward the close the play Portia becomes merry and in this frame of mind she is more lovely than ever.

Some one has asked: "What would life be without the merry tinkling laughter of woman?" and promptly comes the response: "It would be dreary indeed." The same person has said: "The laugh of man is but a course 'horse laugh'." Men do not like to acknowledge it, but the truth of the statement becomes apparent when the contrast is really made.

From the glimpse we get of Portia all through the play, we can but picture her to ourselves as one altogether lovely. We imagine her possessed of a superb form, beautiful face, ruby lips, pretty teeth and laughing eyes. Shakespeare did not give her one bad quality, and Bassanio might well have considered himself fortunate in securing her.

